

I strongly oppose the proposed "broadcast flag." Contrary to the apparent beliefs of the major media companies, they do not own the airwaves. The airwaves are owned by the public. We allow them exclusive use of the airwaves in exchange the service they provide. Allowing the copy protection on the digital television destroys any possibility of fair use. It allows media companies to restrict the development of new technology. It could be used to prevent consumers from using technology like the VCR to timeshift programs. (Do not forget the movie industry's legal fight against the VCR in the 1980s.) If media companies are going to have control over a public commons the like airwaves, they must make reasonable concessions. Mandating digital television copyright protection goes too far. It takes a public resource entrusted to broadcast companies, and turns into a private profit center. It's as if the FCC were allowing the public park in the center of town not only to be managed by a private firm, but turned into a private golf course with entrance fees and menacing security guards, while still taking the citizens tax dollars to maintain it.